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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR PRESIDENT'S JULY 14 MEETING WITH DUTCH PRIME MINISTER - LAST OF THREE CABLES

REF: THE HAGUE 0395

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Michael F. Gallagher for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Reftel provided some background on Prime Minister Balkenende and the challenges he faces. The second cable examined the four main topics likely to come up in your July 14 meeting. This cable concludes with short summaries on other topics that might arise (energy security, human rights, Russia, NATO, counter-piracy, and non-proliferation).

Energy Security

¶12. (SBU) As the EU's largest net exporter of natural gas by a wide margin, the Netherlands, energy position is unique. Since its discovery in 1959, the giant Groningen gas field (owned 50/50 by Shell and ExxonMobil) has largely funded the Dutch welfare state. But the gas is forecast to run out by 2030. To remain an energy player after its own resources are depleted, the Dutch government is patiently cultivating energy relationships with Algeria, Kazakhstan, Libya, Qatar, and -- most importantly -- Russia as long-term supplier countries. For example, gas pipeline company Gasunie, wholly-owned by the Dutch government, holds a 9 percent stake in Gazprom's Nord Stream pipeline, which will transport gas from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea. The Dutch share our commitment to enhancing Europe's energy security through diverse sources and supply routes. However, we would like the Dutch to take on a more prominent role within the EU to achieve these objectives.

¶13. (SBU) Balkenende is proud of his "Innovation Platform" (a government-wide program to spur education, research and innovation in the Netherlands), particularly as it supports small and medium Dutch enterprises developing clean energy technologies. He has praised the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for directing so many resources to clean energy. He shares the President's conviction that such investments are essential to economic recovery and job creation. In March 2009, the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Energy Research Center of the Netherlands (ECN) to collaborate on renewable energy. In April, NREL's leading solar energy scientists visited ECN to share expertise with Dutch counterparts. The President's meeting with Balkenende presents an ideal opportunity to keep up the momentum on these valuable exchanges.

Human Rights

¶4. (SBU) The Dutch are enthusiastic partners on human rights issues. Secretary Clinton and FM Verhagen have discussed jointly hosting an event during UNGA to highlight the threats faced by girls worldwide and to prompt government action to improve their welfare. The Dutch were thrilled at the U.S. decision to join the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva, where they are serving a second term. The Dutch are particularly proud of serving as the "home of international law" (Hugo Grotius' *Mare Liberum* was published 400 years ago in 1609) and hosting many international legal institutions such as the International Court of Justice, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and International Criminal Court (ICC). Strong ICC supporters, the Dutch anxiously await a Q(ICC). Strong ICC supporters, the Dutch anxiously await a signal from this Administration on its policy towards the ICC.

Russia

¶5. (C) The Dutch are a partner in dealing with Russia on a host of issues, because they strive for strong relations while still being able to be critical of Russian actions. Balkenende and President Medvedev reportedly "hit it off" during the June 19 Russian state visit (long on atmospherics, short on substance). The Dutch consider engagement a priority and deem it important to develop friendly relations with Russia, asserting that "good friends can tell each other

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the truth." Accordingly, Balkenende was straightforward with Medvedev in expressing his concerns about human rights and economic freedom in Russia. The Prime Minister will be anxious to hear the President's point of view on dealing with Russian leadership, from his recent trip to Moscow. Balkenende made much of the fact he was able to speak to then President Putin in German, and felt he had developed a strong personal relationship with him. He is searching for a similar connection with Medvedev. The Dutch also continue to press for Russian answers on the death of a Dutch cameraman in the August 2008 Georgian conflict. Despite these frank discussions, Balkenende has been criticized by human rights advocates for emphasizing business with Russia at the expense of human rights. Dutch imports from Russia totaled USD 33 billion in 2007, second only to Germany, and exports to Russia were USD 22 billion, third behind Germany and Italy. The Russians are seeking cooperation with the Dutch on sustainable energy production, use of nanotechnology, and encouragement of business development for small and medium enterprises. On the security front, the Dutch do not support Russia's overtures to establish a new security structure within Europe, but they see the benefit of dialogue with Russia as a tool to seek common ground and a way forward to an enhanced relationship.

NATO

¶6. (C) The Dutch impact on NATO has been significant, and the President's meeting is a good opportunity to encourage the continued Dutch commitment. They have been quick to support NATO missions with both assets and leadership: navy ships for counter-piracy operations, multiple assets and command structures in ISAF, and troops for the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR). Dutch combat experience in Afghanistan has increased their self-confidence and clout within NATO. Outgoing NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (a former Dutch Foreign Minister) has boosted Dutch involvement during the past five years, and the President's choice for U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, is a source of pride here for his Dutch heritage. Allied Joint Forces Command

Brunsum, which has the operational lead for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and the NATO Response Force (NRF), are located in the south of the Netherlands. On NATO enlargement, the Dutch have been cautious. They felt the alliance moved too quickly on bringing in Romania and Bulgaria, where they believed more reforms were necessary. They also opposed an early extension of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) to the Ukraine and Georgia. As with most countries in NATO, they are searching for the best delineation of responsibilities and commitments between NATO and the EU.

Counter-Piracy

¶7. (C) Dutch officials are active partners in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and Dutch naval frigates have joined the U.S. and other allies to patrol pirate-plagued waters. In August, the Dutch will take command of the EU operation Atalanta. On July 7, the Dutch hosted a legal experts' meeting to review ideas for a regional tribunal to prosecute pirates in the Horn of Africa.

Several countries including Norway, Germany and Russia appear to support the Dutch idea, but France, the UK and U.S. appear to support the Dutch idea, but France, the UK and U.S. strongly oppose the idea of such a tribunal and have refused to attend. The Dutch are also committed to addressing the causes of piracy, including joblessness, lack of governance, and limited rule of law

Non-Proliferation

¶8. (S) The Dutch strongly subscribe to international multi-lateral efforts to curb the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction. They have offered their assistance for the 2010 NPT Conference (without being specific) and have supported U.S. efforts to uphold the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, especially in the instance of Iran. They are charter members of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), actively participate in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (they hosted the June

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2009 Plenary Session in The Hague), and are members of the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The Netherlands backs U.S. plans for missile defense, but have expressed disappointment that the U.S. has taken a largely bilateral approach on this issue. It would have liked to have seen the U.S. anchored its European missile defense efforts in the NATO context. The Dutch are also the host for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

GALLAGHER